

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of displaying messages with a chat client in an information exchange system for transmitting and receiving the messages, the chat client transmitting and receiving the messages to and/or from at least two independent chat networks that each have one or more chat servers that provide independent chat communication service to chat clients, where the chat client is in chat communication with the two chat networks concurrently over a period of time, the method comprising:

designating, with the client, at least one of the two chat networks as an active chat network for receiving messages transmitted by the client;

requesting and obtaining cooperation from the two chat networks for display of messages of the two chat networks;

obtaining, with the client, the messages, at least some of which are transmitted to or received from a first of the at least two chat networks, and at least some of which are transmitted to or received from a second of the at least two chat networks; and

displaying, with the client, the obtained messages in a first discrete display area independent of a message display area of each of the plurality of chat networks.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information exchange system in which user terminals are configured for connection to a plurality of chat networks to transmit and receive messages through the plurality of chat networks, the user terminals having a message display area displaying messages transmitted and received to/from each of the plurality of chat networks, comprising:

designation means designating at least one chat network of the plurality of chat networks as an active chat network for receiving messages transmitted by a user terminal;

message acquiring means of the user terminal for acquiring messages transmitted and received to/from each of the plurality of chat networks requested by cooperation request transmitting means; and

message displaying means of the user terminal for displaying, the acquired messages in a discrete display area independent of a message display area of each of the plurality of chat networks.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An information exchange system according to claim 2, further comprising

message transmission cooperating means of the client for transmitting one of the messages, when the message displayed by said message displaying means is identified for message transmission, to one of the chat networks in the plurality of chat networks to which said identified message is transmitted.

4-12. CANCELLED.

13. (WITHDRAWN) A method, comprising:

obtaining a plurality of messages to be transmitted or received by a chat client over at least two chat networks to which the chat client is connected;

concentrating the obtained messages; and

independently displaying the concentrated messages together in a discrete display area.

14. (WITHDRAWN) A computer readable storage controlling a computer by,

obtaining a plurality of messages to be transmitted or received by a chat client over at least two chat networks to which the chat client is connected;

concentrating the obtained messages; and

independently displaying the concentrated messages together in a discrete display area.

15. (WITHDRAWN) An apparatus, comprising:

a communication unit obtaining a plurality of messages to be transmitted or received over at least one of a plurality of designated chat networks;

a processing unit concentrating the obtained messages; and

a display unit independently displaying the concentrated messages together in a discrete display area.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 1, wherein the displaying comprises displaying messages of both chat networks in the discrete display area independent of another display area for displaying messages of only one of the chat networks.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 1, wherein the discrete display area is separate from another display area that is dedicated to the active chat network.

18. (WITHDRAWN) A method of displaying messages in a chat client, comprising: connecting the chat client to a first chat channel of a first chat network; connecting the chat client to a second chat channel of a second chat network; and displaying in a discrete display area of the client, messages received by the chat client from the first and second chat channels.

19. (WITHDRAWN) A method according to claim 18, further comprising using the client to display, in a chat display area dedicated to displaying messages of an active chat channel, the messages received from the first chat channel, where the active chat channel is the first chat channel.

20. (WITHDRAWN) A method according to claim 19, further comprising: setting the first chat channel as the active chat channel by interactively selecting a message of the first chat channel that is displayed in the discrete display area.

21. (WITHDRAWN) A method according to claim 18, further comprising changing a current active chat network of the chat client from the first chat network to the second chat network in response to and based on interactively selecting a previously displayed chat message of the second chat network.

22. (WITHDRAWN) A chat client simultaneously connecting to at least two distinct and autonomous chat networks, comprising:

a first message display area capable of displaying only chat messages of a first of the chat networks;

a second message display area capable of displaying only messages of a second of the chat networks; and

a third message display area simultaneously displaying some messages of the first chat network and some messages of the second chat network, where the client responds to interactively selecting the first chat network by displaying or making active the first message display area.

23. (WITHDRAWN) A method according to claim 13, wherein the displaying is done in a time series basis.

24. (WITHDRAWN) A computer readable storage according to claim 14, wherein the displaying is done in a time series basis.

25. (WITHDRAWN) An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the displaying is done in a time series basis.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 1, wherein each independent chat network comprises its own set of chat channels separate from the other chat network, where a channel in the first chat network and a different channel in the second chat network are allowed to each have a same identifier for users to select such channels but where such different channels do not share messages.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 1, wherein chat messages are not exchanged between the two chat networks.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 1, wherein the chat networks are different logical chat networks and where a message received by the client is identified according to the network from which it was received.

29. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 1, wherein the discrete display area is a window of the chat client.

30. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A volatile or non-volatile computer-readable storage storing information to allow a computer to perform the method of claim 1.

31. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of displaying messages with a chat client in an information exchange system for transmitting and receiving the messages, the chat client transmitting and receiving the messages to and/or from at least two independent chat networks that provide independent chat communication service to chat clients, where the chat client is in chat communication with the two chat networks concurrently over a period of time, the method comprising:

requesting and obtaining cooperation from the two chat networks for display of messages of the two chat networks;

obtaining, with the client, the messages, at least some of which are transmitted to or received from a first of the at least two chat networks, and at least some of which are transmitted to or received from a second of the at least two chat networks; and

displaying, with the client, the obtained messages in a first discrete display area.

32. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 31, wherein the first discrete display area comprises a window of the chat client.

33. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 31, wherein messages to or from the two chat networks and displayed in the discrete display area are interspersedly transmitted and received by the chat client over the period of time.

34. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method according to claim 31, wherein one of the chat networks is designated as a current destination for messages to be transmitted by the client when a user selects a corresponding message displayed in the discrete display area.

35. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A volatile or non-volatile computer-readable storage storing information to allow a computer to perform the method according to claim 31.

36. (NEW) A method of displaying messages with a chat client in an information exchange system, the chat client transmitting and receiving the messages to and/or from at least two independent chat networks that provide independent chat communication service to chat clients, where the chat client is in chat communication with the two chat networks concurrently over a period of time, the method comprising:

requesting and obtaining cooperation from the two chat networks for display of messages of the two chat networks to automatically extend a display path for the messages;

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obtaining, with the client, the messages of the two chat networks; and
displaying, with the client, the obtained messages in a first discrete display area using the
extended display path.